

MODULE 4 – THEORY OF WAR AND STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

1. The training objective of the Higher Military Strategy and Management Course is to develop participants' military strategic thinking and decision-making skills. In attaining this objective, the theory of war and strategy module is designed to enable participants appraise the nature, character and theories of war as well as the relationship between war and strategy utilizing strategic thinking skills. As part of this module, participants will write a 2000 - word paper that is assessed. The 'white' for this paper will be issued during the module.

AIM

2. The aim of this pamphlet is to outline the learning specifications for Module 4.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

3. The Learning Objective of Module 4 (LO4) is to analyze and evaluate the critical elements of war and strategy through the application of strategic thinking skills.

ENABLING OBJECTIVES AND KEY LEARNING POINTS

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4. To attain LO 4, the Enabling Objectives (EO) and Key Learning Points (KLP) are:

Enabling Objectives	Key Learning Points	Sub-Key Learning Points
(a)	(b)	(c)
EO 4.1: Discuss the conceptual perspectives of war	KLP 4.1.1 Discuss the evolution of war.	
	KLP 4.1.2 Discuss the diverse causative factors of war.	
	KLP 4.1.3 Discuss the types of war insurgency, counter insurgency, terrorism, counter terrorism, regular, irregular, limited, full war among others.	
	KLP 4.1.4 Describe the levels of warfare.	
EO 4.2: Discuss the theory of strategy	KLP 4.2.1 Describe the foundation of strategy.	
	KLP 4.2.2 Explain the link between war, policy and strategy.	
	KLP 4.2.3 Describe the levels of strategy and distinctions between grand strategy, national and military strategy.	
	KLP 4.2.4 Analyze some techniques for formulating and evaluating strategy.	
	KLP 4.2.5 Discuss the fundamentals of military strategy.	

(a)	(b)	(c)
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<p>EO 4.3: Analyze the nature and character of war as well as strategy through the viewpoint of selected theorists</p>	<p>KLP 4.3.1 Explain and discuss Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini’s thoughts on war.</p>	
	<p>KLP 4.3.2 Analyze and appraise Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini’s thoughts on war in the context of contemporary military operations.</p>	
	<p>KLP 4.3.3 Explain and discuss Liddel Hart’s thoughts on the Indirect Approach.</p>	
	<p>KLP 4.3.4 Analyze Liddell Hart’s thoughts on the fundamentals of strategy and grand strategy.</p>	
	<p>KLP 4.3.5 Evaluate the thoughts of selected theorists (including David Galula and Mao Zedong) on the prosecution of war and conduct of contemporary military operations.</p>	
<p>EO 4.4: Appraise contemporary thinking on war and strategy</p>	<p>KLP 4.4.1 Discuss the prosecution of war, conflict termination and victory in the contemporary environment.</p>	
	<p>KLP 4.4.2 Appraise the Just War Theory.</p>	
	<p>KLP 1.1.1 Discuss ethical reasoning and modern warfare</p>	
<p>EO 4.5: Apply strategic thinking in analysing strategic models for winning wars</p>	<p>KLP 4.5.1 Analyze war fighting concepts and strategies for winning wars and peace in the contemporary environment.</p>	
	<p>KLP 4.5.2 Discuss emerging concepts and thinking on war and strategy</p>	
	<p>KLP 4.5.3 Appraise strategies for prosecuting and winning future wars.</p>	

EO 4.6: Appraise enduring indigenous thinking on war and strategy	KLP 4.6.1 Introduce indigenous war theories.	
	KLP 4.6.2 Appraise indigenous war theories from the exploit of Alaafin Sango.	
	KLP 4.6.3 Appraise indigenous war theories from the perspective of Uthman Dan Fodio	

SCOPE

6. The module will cover the following topics:

a. **Conceptual Perspectives on War.** The conceptual perspectives on war set the momentum for the module. It will cover lectures on the evolution of war and build on the thinking skills honed in Module 1 to discuss the causative factors of war. The discussions will also address the types and levels of war. It is pertinent that a simplistic approach is not adopted by only providing definitions of these concepts. Rather, it is essential that different perspectives of these concepts are considered taking due cognisance of the changing dynamics in the contemporary environment.

b. **Reading List.**

(1) Michael. I. Handell, “Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought”, 3rd Ed, Frank Cass Publishers, (December 2001): 33-40

(2) Beatrice Heuser, The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present, (Cambridge, University Press. 2010): 54-100, 387-440.

(3) Ogbogbo CBN, “Conceptual Perspectives on War.” A paper presented to Participants of Army War College Nigeria Course 7 Apr 25, 2023.

c. **Theory of Strategy.** The Theory or Concept of Strategy seeks to harness the different perspectives on strategy and imbue in participants the foundations of strategy as well as establish the nexus between war, policy and strategy. It will provide insights into the expected separation in the roles of the policy makers (political masters) and military leaders. Participants will be introduced to the levels of strategy with focus on the application of strategy in the achievement of military objectives. The lesson will also look into the formulation and evaluation of strategy. It will highlight the guidelines that offer an approach to addressing the complexity of strategy to achieve the coherence, continuity, and consensus that policymakers seek in

designing, developing and executing national security and military strategies.

d. **Reading List.**

(1) Sam Momah, “Global Strategy”, (Lagos, Generation Press. 2009), 1-51.

(2) Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Military Power,” in *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 25-49 (25-26, 39-49).

(3) Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., “The Use of Force,” in *Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), 61-68.

(4) Robert J. Art, “To What Ends Military Power?” in *American Defence Policy*, ed. Paul J. Bolt, Damon V. Coletta, and Colins G. Shackelford, Jr. (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press), 242-247.

(5) Basil Liddell Hart, “Strategy: *The Indirect Approach*”, no. 1 (New Delhi, Pentagon Press. 2012), 333-351.

(6) Udounwa SE, “Fundamentals of Military Strategy.” A paper presented to Participants of Army War College Nigeria Course 7 Apr 26, 2023.

e. **Sun Tzu's Thoughts on War.** Sun Tzu begins his book on strategic thought with the observation that war is of vital importance to the state and deserves thorough study. Best known for aphoristic comments on how to conduct war such as "All warfare is based on deception" (p.66) - A simplistic comprehension of Sun Tzu's work as a collection of proverbs will be unhelpful to participants. Instead, his style of writing needs to be viewed as a form of wisdom literature, a philosophical guide through which the participant learns the art of generalship by internalizing certain principles. Participants need to comprehend Sun Tzu's theory of war and analyze as well as synthesize the fundamental concepts of his theories in their development as contemporary students of war, policy, and strategy.

f. **Reading List.**

(1) Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 63-110. 14) Michael Warner, "The Divine Skein: Sun Tzu on Intelligence," *Intelligence and National Security* 21, no. 4 (August 2006): 483-492.

(2) Edward O'Dowd and Arthur Waldron, "Sun Tzu for Strategists," *Comparative*

Strategy 10, no. 1 (1991), 25-36 in [Taylor & Francis] (accessed 27 May 2015).

g. **Clausewitz Thoughts on War.**

Clausewitz's masterwork, *On War*, was his effort to understand the transformation of war from the limited dynastic wars of the 18th Century to the national wars unleashed by the French Revolution and Napoleon. It is essential for participants to interrogate the meaning of war as an instrument of policy and Clausewitz's distinction between absolute and real war. Also of interest is Clausewitz's theory of the "paradoxical trinity" and its application in addressing current and future strategic problems.

h. **Reading List.**

- (1) Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. And trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret

Book One:

Chapter 1. "What is War?" 75-89

Chapter 2. "Purpose and Means in War," 90-99.

Book Eight:

Chapter 2. "Absolute War and Real War," 579-581.

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Chapter 3a. "Interdependence of the Elements of War," 582-584

Chapter 3b. "Scale of the Military Objective and of the Effort to be Made," 585-586 (end of second full paragraph: "...whether these roles are united in a single individual or not.") and 593 (start of third full paragraph: "At this point our historical....")- 594.

Chapter 6b. "War is an Instrument of Policy," 605-608.

Book One:

Chapter 3. "On Military Genius," 100-112.

Chapter 4. "On Danger in War," 113-114.

Chapter 5. "Physical Effort in War," 115-116.

Chapter 7. "Friction in War," 119-121.

(2) Chris Bassford, "Clausewitz's Trinity." 0:20, [<http://www.clausewitz.com/Flash/FLVs/ROMP.htm>] (accessed 27 May 2015).

(3) Antulio Echevarria, "Clausewitz and Contemporary Warfare," July 16, 2014, *YouTube*, streaming video, 64:00 (start at 4:00)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqtOsMXMwEo> (accessed 27 May 2015).

i. **Jomini's Thoughts on War.** Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini adds to our understanding of land power as one of the most influential military thinkers of the 19th Century. Using extracts from his influential work, *The Art of War*, participants will explore Jomini's ideas on war, strategy, and operational art.

j. **Reading List.**

(1) Christopher Bassford, "Jomini and Clausewitz: Their Interaction." An edited version of a paper presented to the 23rd Meeting of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe at Georgia State University February 26, 1993, at: [<http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Bassford/Jomini/JOMINIX.htm>] (accessed 26 May 2015). [**Online**]

(2) Optional Video Clip. "*Albert Comments on Jomini and Clausewitz,*" November 18, 2010, YouTube, streaming video, 8:39, [https://youtu.be/82_1NcKwToo] (accessed 27 May 2015).

k. **Contemporary Thinking in War and Strategy.** Under contemporary thinking in war and strategy, the prosecution of war, conflict termination

and victory in the contemporary environment will be discussed. The lesson will cover the contradictory nature of war including the principle of continuity and culminating point of victory. War leads to situations in which the normal ethical rules that manage societal interactions are defied. It is against this background that the considerations inherent in the concept of Just War will be analyzed. This lesson will also explore the ways ethics, norms, and laws, impact the formulation and execution of strategy in a just war. It will build on lessons from Module 1 to discuss ethical reasoning and modern warfare. The profession of arms is a fundamentally moral endeavor based on trust and certified through character, competence, and commitment. It is designed to assist senior leaders in comprehending moral challenges and applying ethical reasoning at the operational level to empower virtuous service, wise decision making, and stewardship of the profession of arms according to age-long values and traditions.

1. **Reading List.**

- (1) Michael. I. Handell, “Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought”, 3rd Ed, Frank Cass Publishers, (December 2001): 165-194.

(2) Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan, “The Just War Tradition: Ethics in Modern Warfare”, (London, Bloomsbury. 2007).

(3) Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present*, (Cambridge, University Press. 2010): 441-466.

(4) Antulio J. Echevarria II, “Military Strategy – A Short Intro”, (Oxford Press, 2019).

m. **Strategies for Winning Wars in a Complex Environment**. War is never conducted in a vacuum, and many of the factors that influence its complex environment provide opportunities for, or impose constraints upon, operational/strategic leaders and strategists. Understanding those factors is essential to success in the strategic arena. War fighting concepts and strategies for winning wars and peace in the contemporary environment will also be addressed.

n. **Reading List**.

(1) J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., ed. *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*, 5th ed., vol. II: *National Security Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, July 2012) at:

[<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1110.pdf>] (accessed 27 May 2015).

(2) Daniel Kahneman, Dan Lovallo, and Olivier Sibony, “The Big Idea: Before You Make that Big Decision . . .,” *Harvard Business Review* (June 2011): 51-60.
[Instructor Handout]

(3) Chet Miller, and R. Duane Ireland, “Intuition in Strategic Decision Making: Friend or Foe in the Fast-Paced 21st Century?” *Academy of Management Executive* 19, no. 1 (February 2005): 19-30. This reading examines the role of intuition or “gut feel” in executive decision making.
[Instructor Handout]

(4) Cass R. Sunstein and Reid Hastie, “Making Dumb Groups Smarter: The new science of group decision making,” *Harvard Business Review* (December 2014): 90-98.
[Instructor Handout]

n. **Indigenous War Theorists**. There are a number of indigenous theorists whose exploits have gone unreported despite recorded successes. This underscores the need to study some notable indigenous theorists for better understanding by participants.

b. **Reading List.**

(1) Joel E, “The Nature, Strategy and Tactics of Uthman Dan Fodio’s Campaign in Gobir”, Army War College Nigeria Monograph 6 (October 2023).

(2) Moses US, “The Alaafin Sango Art of War”, Army War College Nigeria Monograph 7 (October 2023).

ASSESSMENT

8. Participants will be expected to write a 2000-word paper on a selected topic. In their submissions, participants will be expected to apply their strategic thinking skills in synthesizing critical elements of theory of war and strategy in addressing contemporary issues.

9. An assessed ‘War of the Theorists’ debate session will also be conducted by participants. The requirements for the paper and debate session will be issued through separate instructions to participants.

READING LIST

10. The reading list for each lesson group is indicated above. This list is not exhaustive and has deliberately not been broken into essential, desirable and supplementary readings because participants are encouraged to read as

widely as possible due to the importance of the module. The different thoughts and perspectives promote the attainment of a ‘Socratic’ environment during the delivery of the module.

LECTURES AND EXERCISES FOR MODULE 4

11. Lectures and exercises for Module 4 are as follows:

a. **22 Apr 24.**

- (1) Introduction to Module 4.
- (2) Introduction to Strategy (Link War and Strategy) – Syndicate Seminar.
- (3) Introduction to Sun Tzu and the Art of War – Syndicate Seminar.
- (4) Conceptual Perspectives on War.
- (5) Fundamentals of Military Strategy.

b. **23 Apr 24.**

- (1) Introduction to the Theory of War.
- (2) Introduction to David Galula’s Counterinsurgency Warfare.

d. **24 Apr 24.**

- (1) The Alaafin Sango Art of War.
- (2) Application of Sun Tzu’s Art of War to Contemporary Military Operations.

e. **25 Apr 24.**

(1) Thucydides and the Peloponnesian Wars.

(2) The Nature, Strategy and Tactics of Uthman Dan Fodio's Campaign in Gobir.

f. **29 Apr 24.**

(1) Introduction to Clausewitz Thoughts on War – Syndicate Seminar.

(2) Application of Clausewitz's thoughts on war to Contemporary Operations.

(3) Jomini's Thoughts on the Art of War.

(4) Liddell Hart's Thoughts on Fundamentals of Strategy and Grand Strategy.

g. **30 Apr 24.**

(1) Strategies for Winning War and Peace in the Contemporary Environment.

(2) Prosecuting War in a Complex Environment.

(3) Just War Theory.

h. **2 May 24.**

(1) Introduction to the Works of Mao Zedong/ Application of Mao Zedong's Thoughts on Guerrilla/Protracted War.

(3) Introduction to Campaign Planning Concepts.

(4) Military Strategy in Past NA Operations Perspective (1).

i. **6 May 24.**

(1) Military Strategy in Past NA Operations Perspective (2).

(2) Levels of Warfare/Operational Art – Syndicate Seminar.

k. **7 May 24.** War of the Theorists.